

7495, Oregon-Davis School Corp

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Over the past two years the Oregon-Davis School Corporation has evaluated its teaching practices, its classrooms, and the future of our students. Through our technology committee meetings we found that we were lacking in the advancements that engage and inspire young minds. When we started on this path we had no idea where it was going to take us.

Oregon-Davis is a small rural school with 52% on free and reduced lunch and currently our county has a 14% unemployment rate. Starke County is the second poorest county in the state of Indiana. As the economy continues to struggle our free and reduced rate rises almost daily. Our graduation rate is at 85% and our attendance rate is only 92%. The JR/SR high school has 350 students 7-12 with 750 students K-12. Students are greatly involved in 4-H, FFA, as well as athletics, music, and many other areas yet many students struggle to be motivated to learn and to stay in school and even fewer continue in post-secondary training.

Over the past year staff members at ODSC observed multiple New Tech high schools in Indiana and California. We learned that this model would bring the elements of 21st century learning with 21st century tools. We felt this would help connect students with their learning, make school more relevant, and give students the motivation to continue through their education. We decided to further investigate New Tech and by February 2009 we had a master plan accepted by the New Tech Foundation and we are now on our way to implementation of both the freshmen and sophomore classes for Fall 2010.

In preparation for this change teachers are creating new curriculum to meet the needs of the NT model, a director of instructional technology has been hired for in-house training and assistance to the teachers, and purchases of computers and infrastructure have been made to begin the process of meeting a 1:1 environment.

Oregon-Davis has already purchased 75 new computers to start establishing the 1:1. The school has also purchased 7 new servers and network equipment and will be establishing a new network to accommodate the new teaching style. The funds from this grant would be used to purchase 3 computer labs for the English classes and establish a 1:1 ratio for students. We have chosen to use the MacBook by Apple as the tool that will be used in the classroom to create and redefine assignments. The labs that will be purchased will be mobile and allow us to implement the 1:1 while retrofitting the building for New Tech.

Despite new methods of teaching, unfortunately some students do not take school seriously and fall behind. Oregon-Davis has offered credit recovery through A+ software. This program provides students an alternative to dropping out or repeating a year/course. Oregon-Davis has opened up seats to other schools to help their students as well. Oregon-Davis will continue to partner with other schools to help with credit recovery. A+ software gives students the motivation and desire to succeed in school. Oregon-Davis and Westville High Schools will partner to make it possible for more students to stay in school, lower dropout rates, and raise graduation rates. The partner portion of this grant will help students both in the alternative school and in the classroom. This helps assist many more students to have success in education

If no child is to be left behind then plans must be in place to meet the needs of all students. This plan along with the partnership with Westville will meet the needs of more students than what either school is currently doing. Oregon-Davis has already made significant investments in both parts of the project and will continue to move forward. This is transformation of teaching and not just a small project. The dollars spent will go farther and be a part of real change.